

## Book Review: This Was Our Pact by Ryan Andrews

Review by Sarathy Selvam

The protagonist or main character of the book, Ben, and his group of friends are accustomed to their town's paper lantern celebration. The people of Ben's town amass a group of paper lanterns in a river during the Fall Equinox Festival. The curiosity and awe fluctuates within Ben's friendgroup, as they all wonder where these paper lanterns go. The friends finally come to a decision, a quest, not just any adventurous quest a group of young children would partake in, but a magical one. Their quest is based off of a pact, one that emphasizes their relentless effort to follow the lanterns' journeys within the river. They are to follow the lanterns no matter what, and follow through and abide with the pact they all have agreed upon. Ben and his friends embark on a world full of flying fish, birds of a colossal manner, magical bears, as well as water-walking dogs, and they do all of this on their bikes. Ben's friends withdraw from their journey one-by-one, leaving Ben and the 'abnormal kid' of the story, Nathaniel, alone; Ben, usually overlooking their odd friendship, soon realizes the necessity of maintaining a relationship with Nathaniel. The two kids soon realize their quest is not about their much awaited destination, but the experiences they come across on their journey.

I personally was astonished with the caliber of this comic/book. This Was Our Pact brought new meaning to fantasy through its vivid depiction of the scenery they experience; the artwork, the dark purples and mystical blues brought the reader into the world of the characters. The depictions of the setting were not the only thing that seemed very real, but the reality captured within the two types of people explored in the graphic novel. Nathaniel and Ben, the weirdo and his former "bully" forge a bond that can only be described as the perfect relationship. The two characters relate and connect to each other, in which the reader can see the character development from beginning to the end. It was to be called a coming-of-age comic that brought an imagination back to a reader that's been exposed to all different genres and has seen the blandness within previous fantasies. The lanterns were said to have traveled down the river and eventually become the stars of our galaxy were the root to a new deeper relationship possessed between Nathaniel and Ben, something I can't even begin to put into words.